Social Media

Connecting and Engaging with the Fairfax County Community

Fairfax County uses social media tools to engage, interact and communicate with the public.

- Learn more about **why we're using social media**.
- View county social media **metrics**.
- Read about **recent trends** in social media.

Social Media Site Access Process

The four steps below detail the process for **departments/offices to request social media sites for business use**; this is NOT for employees to request individual access.

- **Step 1:** **Read the Social Media Policy** (PDF)

- **Step 2:** **Complete Forms** (Please use these updated Word documents)

  a.) **For everyone to complete: Social Media Access Questionnaire**

  b.) **Social Media Site Forms; choose only the tools you'd like to use:**

  - **Twitter**
  - **Facebook**
  - **YouTube**

  Other Social Media Sites: There's one SlideShare account for presentations and narrated PowerPoints; there's one county Flickr account (with one exception for the Library). IdeaScale, a tool for social voting, is in a pilot phase and centrally coordinated. Please work with OPA if you'd like content to appear on these social media sites.

- **Step 3:** The **E-government Steering Committee** will discuss the request(s) during a scheduled meeting. You may be asked to join the meeting for clarification and explanation.

- **Step 4:** **If approved:**

  a.) Agencies must notify DIT's Information Security Office if staff members beyond PIOs (who already have permissions to view social media sites) need access; each employee will need to complete the Exception to Policy form.

  b.) Begin work with OPA to establish social media presence.

  c.) Attend social media workshop(s) for publishers sponsored by OPA; review forthcoming reference/training materials on the intranet (materials will be published when the new intranet, FairfaxNET, goes live).

  d.) Begin using social media! Coordination, best practices and policies will be refined and updated as social media evolves everyday.

  If not approved, then it's likely that your social media needs can be met through the county's Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts. OPA always welcomes new content for consideration on these sites and we will work hard to ensure you have a way to engage the community on these sites.

If you have any questions about social media and/or this process, contact Greg Licamele in OPA.

APPENDIX F
FAIRFAX COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

PURPOSE
Fairfax County uses social media tools to provide ways to build community and officially and rapidly communicate directly with stakeholders, partners, the general public and the media as part of online communications. These tools are simply another way to deliver public information, customer service and E-government to our residents. To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, county agencies may consider using social media formats to reach a broader audience.

DEFINITIONS
Social media sites refer to a collection of online services such as, but not limited to, Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, Flickr, LinkedIn and Twitter. Social media provides opportunities to engage residents through information sharing, customer service and community building.

POLICY
A. All official Fairfax County presences on social media sites or services are considered an extension of the County's information networks and are also governed by other related policies such as Use of County Electronic Communications Services Policy 70-04 and Information Technology Security Policy 70-05.

B. All social media requests must be submitted in the form of a business case to the Deputy County Executive for Information, who will then consult with the E-Government Steering Committee. If approved, agencies must fill out and have an agency director sign the Procedural Memorandum 70-05 Revised: Request for Waiver/Exemption Form (available at http://infoweb.fairfaxcounty.gov/dit/iso/forms/PM70-05_Exception.pdf) and return it to the Information Security Office in the Department of Information Technology.

C. It is important to ensure the public's trust of Fairfax County's presence on social media sites because many imitation sites (both deliberate and not deliberate) exist. Naming conventions (URLs) for social media sites must be submitted to the Office of Public Affairs in advance before establishing an account to ensure the name is sufficient for an official Fairfax County government entity and are consistent with other department names. Once finalized, all new URLs must be shared with the Information Security Office and the Office of Public Affairs. If agencies are permitted to use Twitter in the future, names will be predetermined. Visual elements of social media sites should be designed, as much as possible, to reflect the public Web site brand of fairfaxcounty.gov to ensure visual consistency and credibility. The Office of Public Affairs reserves the right to develop additional standards for naming conventions and visual consistency as social media sites evolve.

D. Agencies are responsible for establishing, publishing, and updating their pages on social media sites. Although it will be the agency's responsibility to maintain the content, the Office of Public Affairs will monitor the content on each of the agency pages to ensure 1.) a consistent countywide message is being conveyed and 2.) adherence to the Social Media Policy. The Office of Public Affairs also reserves the right to direct agencies to modify social media content based on best practices and industry norms. The Office of Public Affairs will advocate using social media to help departments reach their stated goals by assisting departments in developing appropriate uses for social media, assisting the selecting of appropriate social media outlets and helping departments define a strategy for using social media.

E. Comments from the public are allowed on social media sites but those sections must be monitored daily during working hours to ensure the comments meet certain criteria. Some mediums such as Facebook allow instant commenting while others like YouTube allow for a moderated/approved process. County-created social media forums must be structured narrowly to focus discussions on a particular interest of Fairfax County rather than creating a "public forum." Agencies are only allowed to remove postings that do not meet the narrow focus of a County media forum. All sections of social media Web sites that allow comments must include either a link to the following comments policy published on the public Web site or the complete text published on the social media site:

> The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest in Fairfax County, including its many residents, businesses and visitors. We encourage you to submit your questions, comments, and concerns, but please note this is a moderated online discussion site and not a public forum.

> Once posted, the County reserves the right to delete submissions that contain vulgar language, personal attacks of any kind, or offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial, or religious group. Further, the County also reserves the right to delete comments that are: (i) spam or include links to other sites; (ii) clearly off topic; (iii) advocate illegal activity; (iv) promote particular services, products, or political organizations; or (v) infringe on copyrights or trademarks.
>
> Please note that the comments expressed on this site do not reflect the opinions and position of the Fairfax County government or its officers and employees. If you have any questions concerning the operation of this online moderated discussion site, please contact the [Agency Name] at [agency e-mail]@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Agencies may choose to reply to comments so we're engaged with our residents much like we reply to phone and E-mail inquiries, but business decorum must prevail and factual responses, not opinions, must be shared. Agency staff monitoring for and replying to comments are strongly encouraged to coordinate responses with other agencies, if appropriate, so the best response can be provided. If you are replying on a social media platform, know that it is a series of conversations that constantly evolve. Be a part of them, provide constructive information that mirrors county information elsewhere and don't try to control other peoples' opinions.

F. Wherever possible, links should direct users back to the County's official Web site for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with Fairfax County.

G. All YouTube channels must contain the following disclaimer on the home page and on each video:

> Please note: Fairfax County is not responsible for the content provided on "related" and "promoted" videos that are accessible from this county's YouTube channel. All viewers should note that these related videos and comments expressed on them do not reflect the opinions and position of the Fairfax County government or its officers and employees.

H. Agencies are strongly encouraged to follow the metrics of their social media sites to ensure viability and effectiveness. The Office of Public Affairs reserves the right to occasionally request metric reports.

I. Approval is not needed from the E-Government Steering Committee for podcasting and RSS feeds as Channel 16 and the Department of Information Technology, respectively, produce those social media. The Office of Public Affairs is available to consult with agencies about best practices for both options.

J. Departments that use social media are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and county laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA), First Amendment, privacy laws and information security policies established by Fairfax County.

K. Login information, including User IDs and passwords, should be provided to at least one backup in the agency. Passwords must be secure.

L. Violation of these standards may result in the removal of agency pages from social media sites. The Deputy County Executive for Information retains the authority to remove pages.

M. The E-Government Steering Committee will constantly evaluate various social media technologies and the appropriateness of using these media to promote established County goals and policies.

Social Media Access Questionnaire

The Social Media Access Questionnaire will help you and the E-government Steering Committee better understand business needs, intents and purposes for using social media. Please complete this questionnaire and then the appropriate specific social media form(s) for Facebook, Twitter and/or YouTube.

SECTION I: CONTACT INFORMATION

Date:
Department/Agency:
Submitted By:
Lead/Consulting PIO:

SECTION II: Social Media Use

1.) What's your primary business purpose for requesting social media?

2.) How does this social media fit into your overall communications plan for your agency/initiative?

3.) How do you plan to staff social media sites?

4.) What types of content and information do you plan to publish?

5.) How do you plan to engage the public in dialogue and conversation using these tools?

6.) Have you read the Social Media Policy?

☐ Yes

When finished, E-mail this form to webcontent@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Then complete the appropriate form(s) for the social media platform you want to use.

Facebook Use Form

Facebook is the predominant social media platform that encourages messages, engagement, interaction and customer service with the public. Please fill out the form below to help evaluate this potential use of Facebook.

SECTION I: Contact Information

Date:
Department/Agency:
Submitted By:
Lead/Consulting PIO:

SECTION II: Facebook Profile

Profile Name: To be predetermined in consultation with OPA to meet consistent county branding efforts, but please list your preference (i.e.: Fairfax County Government, Fairfax County Police, Fairfax County Office for Children):

Description: Use about 200 characters to describe your department or efforts. Please use the words "Official" and "Fairfax County" in the text:

Vanity URL: When you reach more than 25 Facebook fans, you are eligible for a vanity URL such as www.facebook.com/fairfaxcounty versus the longer, default version of www.facebook.com/pages/Fairfax-VA/Fairfax-County-Government/27549728910. Please provide your preference below for a vanity URL:

Image/Icon: Please attach an image to the E-mail you will send to webcontent@fairfaxcounty.gov with this fom that will appear in the top left of your Facebook profile. This image then appears as a thumbnail picture that will serve as your unique department identifier for the public. You may choose to attach an image that is an icon only or one that has other image elements, but then you can crop the thumbnail version on Facebook. The maximum width for all Facebook profile pictures is 200 pixels wide.

SECTION III: Approved Administrators

Page administrators must have a Facebook account. Permissions are based on individual personal profiles rather than one county/department account that people are assigned to. When OPA first creates your Facebook Page before it goes live, each admin must become a "fan" or "like" the page and then OPA will make the person an administrator. Please identify who will serve as an admin (the list may, of course, change, so please notify OPA). One OPA staff member will also be an admin for all

county Facebook accounts as support and backup. **Note:** ONLY county employees may be administrators; volunteers and BAC members are not eligible:

SECTION IV: Audience

As with any communications activity, it is important to define your intended target audience(s) in order to develop and communicate messages that resonate with your audience and prompt them to take action. However, since Facebook posts can be viewed beyond the original audience, it is necessary for each posting to stand alone and contain all necessary information. The profile name and biography will appeal to the target audience and people will follow based on interest in the topic.

Please describe the audience you are trying to reach:

SECTION V: Example Postings

Please provide four examples of posts you would publish. Posts are limited to 420 characters, but you should aim to use as little text as possible for effective updates. For example purposes only, use this shortened link for links you'd like to include: http://go.usa.gov/i5w:

Post 1:

Post 2:

Post 3:

Post 4:

SECTION VI: Additional Questions

How will you promote your Facebook use?

How will you evaluate success? What metrics will you use?

How often will you post updates? How often will you monitor responses/questions/comments? How quickly will you reply to questions?

SECTION VII: Facebook Workshop

If approved, then all staff listed above will be required to attend a Facebook workshop. Topics to be addressed include:

- Enabling/Disabling Facebook settings
- What to post
- What not to post

- How to write a good post
- Coordinating county information on Facebook Pages
- Favoriting other Facebook Pages
- Customer service issues
- Uploading photos and videos
- FBML, Facebook's version of HTML
- Facebook during an emergency
- Adding applications
- Facebook mail updates
- Metrics
- Link shorteners
- Differences between personal accounts and business Pages

When finished, send this form and the required image to webcontent@fairfaxcounty.gov. Do not embed the image in this Word document; it needs to be sent as a separate JPG image.

Twitter Use Form

Twitter is a microblogging platform that encourages messages, engagement, interaction and customer service with the public. Please fill out the form below to help evaluate this potential use of Twitter.

SECTION I: Contact Information

Date:
Department/Agency:
Submitted By:
Lead/Consulting PIO:

SECTION II: Twitter Profile

Profile Name: To be predetermined in consultation with OPA to meet consistent county branding efforts.

Biography: Use these 160 characters to describe your department or efforts. Please use the words "Official" and "Fairfax County" in the text:

Web Site URL: Please list your main department URL:

(These next two sections require you to attach images to the E-mail you will send to webcontent@fairfaxcounty.gov with this form)

Department Background Template Image: Please attach a 150x150 pixel JPG picture that will serve as your unique department identifier on the standard Fairfax County Twitter background (visit www.twitter.com/fairfaxcounty to see the standard background).

Department Twitter Icon: Please submit a 48x48 pixel icon that will appear with all tweets. This will be your main Twitter visual identity as most people see tweets amid all of their updates with other organizations and people.

SECTION III: Approved Users and CoTweet

We will be using CoTweet to manage all county Twitter accounts. Please list who needs access to tweet along with their county E-mail address:

Please have these county staff (no volunteers or BAC members) visit www.cotweet.com and establish their own account with their fairfaxcounty.gov E-mail address. They will receive notification at a later date with access to the department Twitter account.

SECTION IV: Audience

As with any communications activity, it is important to define your intended target audience(s) in order to develop and communicate messages that resonate with your audience and prompt them to take action. However, since Twitter posts can be viewed beyond the original audience, it is necessary for each tweet to stand alone and contain all necessary information. The profile name and biography will appeal to the target audience and people will follow based on interest in the topic.

Please describe the audience you are trying to reach:

SECTION V: Example Tweets

Please provide four examples of tweets you would publish. Tweets are limited to 140 characters, but 130 characters are ideal so followers can retweet the message without edits. For example purposes only, use this shortened link for links you'd like to include: http://go.usa.gov/i5w

Tweet 1:

Tweet 2:

Tweet 3:

Tweet 4:

SECTION VI: Additional Questions

How will you promote your Twitter use?

How will you evaluate success? What metrics will you use?

How often will you tweet? How often will you monitor tweets?

SECTION VII: Twitter Workshop

If approved, then all staff listed above will be required to attend a Twitter workshop. Topics to be addressed include:

- What to tweet
- What not to tweet
- How to write a good tweet
- Retweeting county information
- Retweeting non-county information
- Hashtags
- Monitoring Twitter
- Customer service issues
- CoTweet
- Twitter during an emergency

- @Replies

When finished, please send this form and the two JPG images to webcontent@fairfaxcounty.gov. Do not embed the image in this Word document; it needs to be sent as a separate JPG image.

YouTube Use Form

This is a form to create a separate YouTube channel. While any agency can apply for a YouTube channel, please be mindful that you need to be able to sustain the channel with frequent updates. For most agencies, this may mean relying on the county's YouTube channel for your social media video needs instead.

SECTION I: Contact Information

Date:
Department/Agency:
Submitted By:
Lead/Consulting PIO:

SECTION II: YouTube Profile

Profile Name: To be predetermined in consultation with OPA to meet consistent county branding efforts, but please list your preference (i.e.: fairfaxcountypolice, fairfaxcountygov):

Description: Use about 200 characters to describe your department on YouTube. Please use the words "Official" and "Fairfax County" in the text:

SECTION III: Approved Administrators

Agencies must first create a generic Google account to then create a YouTube channel. Agencies will be responsible for the protection of the logins/passwords. As for who will have access to the logins and passwords, please provide a list of names:

SECTION VI: Additional Questions

How will you promote your YouTube channel?

How will you evaluate success? What metrics will you use?

What kinds of videos will you publish to your channel? How frequently?

SECTION VII: YouTube Workshop

If approved, then all staff listed above will be required to attend a YouTube workshop. Topics to be addressed include:

- Enabling/Disabling YouTube settings
- How to upload
- What to upload
- What not to upload
- Tagging
- YouTube modules
- Creating playlists
- Favoriting other videos
- Linking videos to other social media sites
- Creating custom backgrounds and channel banners
- Metrics

When finished, send this form to webcontent@fairfaxcounty.gov.